

368 HOBBS AND THE ABSOLUTE
STATE

practical purpose. ** There can be nothing more instructive towards loyalty and justice than the memory of that war. Your Lordship may do with it what you please. I petition not to have it published/' This was a pose, for he presented a copy to the King, and a few days later asked permission to print it. Charles heard him graciously but flatly refused.

Garbled editions appeared, and in 1682, after the author's death, the first authentic text was published. Since no book was more in demand at all the booksellers, declared the publisher in the preface, he owed it both to the author and to the public to provide a true version. A still better edition, restoring omitted passages, was published in 1889 by Tonnies, who found the original in St. John's College, Oxford.

The first and most interesting of the four dialogues presents the background of the civil war seen through the spectacles of an impenitent absolutist. Charles I, we are told, was kicked no virtue of body or mind and merely tried to do his duty. He was confronted by all kinds of injustice and folly. The people were corrupted, and disobedient persons were esteemed the best patriots. They were seduced by Presbyterian Ministers, Papists, Independents, Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchy men, Quakers, Adamites, and other sects whose names and doctrines he could not remember. " These were the enemies which arose against His Majesty from the private interpretation of the Scriptures." Others had been led astray by the cult of liberty in the classics. The City of London and other great trading centres envied the prosperity of the Low Countries after their revolt against Spain and wished to copy their example. Wasters and unemployed swelled the ranks of discontent. At the end of his list Hobbes goes to the root of

the trouble as he saw it. " The people in general were so ignorant of their duty that not one perhaps of ten thousand knew what right any man had to command him, or what necessity there was of King or Commonwealth for which he was to part with his money against his will." That some of the King's opponents may have thought deeply about such matters and have reached conclusions differing from his own does not enter his head. The whole presentation of the constitutional struggle is even more superficial and unimaginative than that of Ckrendon himself. He has no use for Parliament either as an organ of government or a school of political education. The principle of representation on which our liberties have been built up leaves him cold.